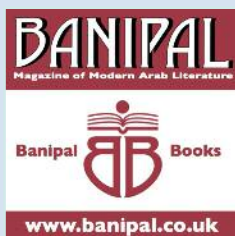




Banipal magazine and books

– for top-quality Arabic literary fiction and poetry
in English translation

2022 is the 25th year of this specialist independent
press publishing contemporary Arab authors
in English translation



"Banipal is not merely a bridge between two cultures but, rather, a laboratory of sorts, where the two sides meet – a laboratory that illuminates the styles of modern Arabic writing" – Adonis

"If anybody wants to know what is written in Arabic today but does not know Arabic, he or she just needs to read Banipal" – Stefan Weidner

Banipal Publishing was founded in 1997 by two people passionate about literature, Iraqi author Samuel Shimon and British editor Margaret Obank, to publish inspiring, unknown works by contemporary Arab authors in English translation (and occasionally in their original English, or other language) in the thrice-yearly Banipal magazine.

Over the years they also selected a few crucial works to publish as paperbacks under the imprint Banipal Books. In 2019, they decided to publish more books – decisive works from the wealth of Arabic memoir, fiction and poetry being published today – and to expand the magazine portfolio to include a Spanish edition and plan a German one.

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Things I Left Behind by Shada Mustafa

Translated from the Arabic
by Nancy Roberts

This is young Palestinian author Shada Mustafa's debut novel – a free-flowing narrative that interrogates, in short, direct sentences, the memories of growing up, falling in love, that keep forcing themselves out to be reckoned with. Through ceaseless questioning, and the seemingly random revisiting of each of the four “things” she has left behind, the narrator redeems her life from the inexplicable pain and tragic anguish that was her childhood in an occupied and divided land and family. In so doing, Mustafa creates a unique writing style while at the same time allowing the narrative its original, cathartic function, liberating herself from her past, and finding her true self.

Why was she always having to cross the Qalandia checkpoint to see her dad or her mom? Why did they divorce? Why was her mom angry? How could she make her happy? Why was her dad a different man when he came out of the occupier's prison? What was more important, the cause or the people? The questions become more urgent when she becomes a student and falls in love.

his short novel, original in its subject as much as its narrative technique, has been singled out from the start by being shortlisted for the 2021 Sheikh Zayed Book Award for Young Authors.



Novel • 144 pages

May 2022

B-format PB with flaps

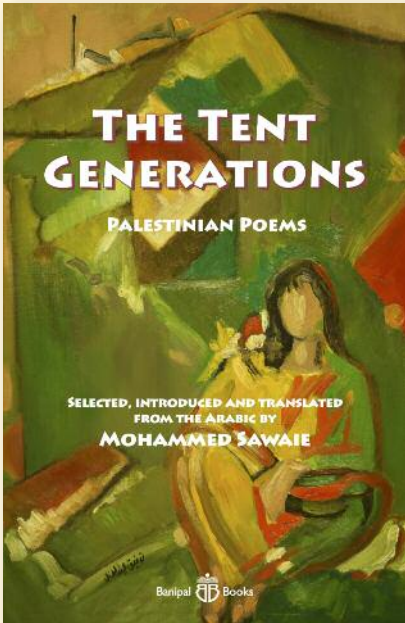
PB ISBN: 978-1-913043-26-1 • £9.99

eISBN: 978-1-913043-27-8 • £6.99

Territories: World

Shada Mustafa is a Palestinian writer, born in 1995. She graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at the American University of Beirut (AUB), and is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Geographical Development Studies at the Free University of Berlin.

Nancy Roberts is an award-winning translator of novels by contemporary Arab authors. Her most recent translation is *The Slave Yards* by Najwa Bin Shatwan (2020).



Poetry • 160 pages

April 2022

B-format PB with flaps

PB ISBN: 978-1-913043-18-6 • £10.99

eISBN: 978-1-913043-19-3 • £6.99

Territories: World

Mohammed Sawaie is Professor of Arabic at the University of Virginia and a passionate reader of both English and Arabic on issues related to Arabic literary production, the Middle East generally and Palestine in particular. An authority on the sociolinguistic, historical, and grammatical aspects of Arabic, his *Fundamentals of Arabic Grammar* (Routledge, 2014) has helped transform the teaching of Arabic in North America.

The Tent Generations, Palestinian Poems

Selected, Introduced, and Translated from the Arabic by Mohammed Sawaie

The Tent Generations, Palestinian Poems gathers together works by a select number of Palestinian poets, over the past seven decades, that give expression to the Palestinian experience under Israeli rule and Israeli occupation, as well as the experience of dispersion and displacement from their homeland following the Nakba, the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, and the subsequent wars of 1967 and 1973.

These poems illuminate Palestinian responses to these tragic conflicts and wars that contributed to the loss of homeland, life under Israeli occupation, and the fragmentation and ruin of society and community. The poets in this collection span and represent different generations and narratives, different backgrounds, and different locations, some of whose voices have not been heard previously in English, and, by and large, others whose works are not previously translated into English.

Although these poems cannot resolve the deep contradictions and disagreements that divide Palestinians and Israelis today, Mohammed Sawaie shows in this collection how these poets use poetry to describe their relationship to the Palestinian people, their homeland, and the presence of an Israeli occupier in their midst.

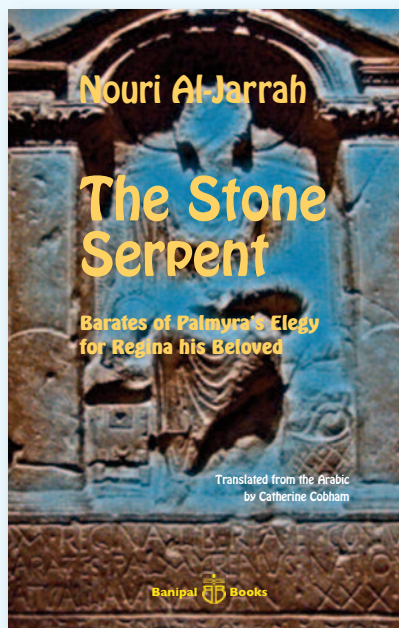
The Stone Serpent, Barates of Palmyra's Elegy for Regina his Beloved by Nouri al-Jarrah

Translated from the Arabic by
Catherine Cobham

Syrian poet Nouri al-Jarrah brings to life a story that can never again be lost in time after a single line in Aramaic on a tombstone fired his imagination. This inspiring epic poem awakens two extraordinary lovers, Barates, a Syrian from Palmyra, and Regina, the Celtic slave he freed and married, from where they have lain at rest beside Hadrian's Wall for eighteen centuries, and tells their unique story.

Barates' elegy to his beloved wife, who died young at 30, is, however, not about mythologising history. With the poet himself an exile in Britain for 40 years from his birthplace of Damascus, the poem forges new connections with today, linking al-Jarrah's personal journey with that of his ancient forebear Barates, who resisted slavery with love and freedom.

Barates' Eastern song also questions whether the young Celtic fighters, the Tattooed Ones, were really barbarians, as they emerged from forest mists to defend their hills and rivers and their way of life from the Romans, and died or lay wounded at the twisting stone serpent that was Hadrian's Wall



Poetry • 160 pages

October 2022

B-format PB with flaps

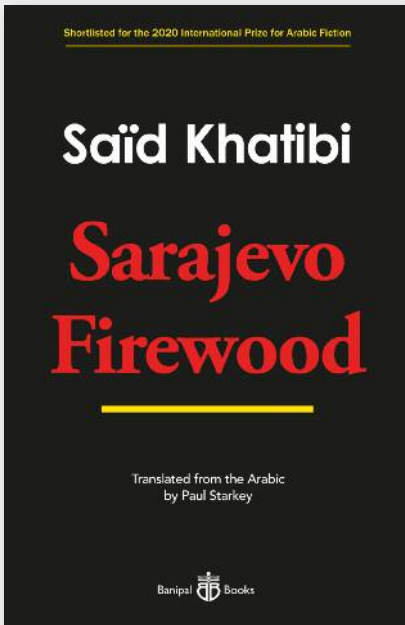
ISBN: 978-1-913043-29-2 • £10.99

eISBN: 978-1-913043-30-8 • £6.99

Territories: World

Nouri al-Jarrah was born in Damascus in 1956. His poetry draws on diverse cultural sources, and is marked by a focus on mythology, folk tales and legends. *A Boat to Lesbos and other Poems* (Banipal Books, 2018, tr Camilo Gómez-Rivas and Allison Blecker) was his first collection in English translation.

Catherine Cobham teaches Arabic language and literature at the University of St Andrews, Scotland, and has translated works of a number of Arab writers.



Fiction • 320 pages

September 2021

B-format PB with flaps

ISBN: 978-1-913043-23-0 • £11.99

eISBN: 978-1-913043-24-7 • £6.99

Territories: World

Saïd Khatibi is a novelist, travel writer, translator and cultural journalist, born in 1984 in Bou Saada, Algeria. He writes in Arabic and French and translates between both. He has a BA in French Literature from the University of Algiers and an MA in Cultural Studies from the Sorbonne. He has three novels in Arabic.

Paul Starkey is an award-winning translator and Emeritus Professor of Arabic, Durham University, UK.

Sarajevo Firewood by Saïd Khatibi

Translated from the Arabic
by Paul Starkey

Sarajevo Firewood, which was shortlisted for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF) award in 2020, explores the legacy of the recent histories of two countries – Algeria and Bosnia and Herzegovina – both of which experienced traumatic, and ultimately futile, civil wars in the 1990s.

The novel narrates the lives of two main characters, with their friends and families: Salim, an Algerian journalist, and Ivana, a young Bosnian woman, both of whom have fled the destruction and hatred of their own countries to try to build a new life in Slovenia. As Ivana pursues her goal of writing her 'dream play', Khatibi's novel brings to life in fictional form the memories and experiences of the countless ordinary people who survived the atrocities linking the two countries.

As such, it represents both a lasting memorial to the thousands of dead and 'disappeared' of the two countries' civil conflicts, and a powerful and novel exploration of the experience of exile to which so many have been subjected over the last few decades.

The Madness of Despair

by Ghalya F T Al Said

Translated from the Arabic by
Raphael Cohen

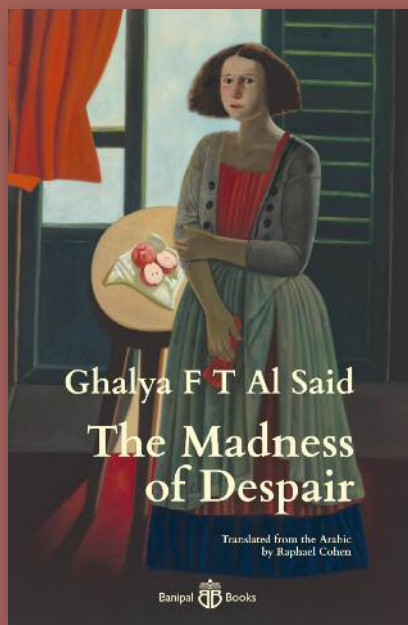
Living in London, far from their Arab homelands, Nafie and his young wife Maliha become good friends with Doctor Nadim, a fellow exile. In the twists and turns of the friendship, the men's nostalgia for their old lives – and their old ways of living – are in constant conflict with Maliha's ambition to live and love freely now she's in London.

Though ready to throw off the constraints of her arranged marriage at the slightest turn, Maliha is ill-prepared for the fire of emotions that overcomes her, leading to unforeseen consequences for all three.

A powerful narrative revealing how psychological suffering and cultural displacement can upset the most ordinary of aspirations for life and love.

"A talented and inventive storyteller, with a well developed sense of tragedy and comedy" – Susannah Tarbush

Raphael Cohen is a professional translator and lexicographer who studied Arabic and Hebrew at Oxford University and the University of Chicago. His translations include novels by George Yarak, Eslam Mosbah, Ahlem Mosteghanemi, Mohamed Salmawy and Mona Prince.



Fiction • 256 pages

September 2021

B-format • PB with flaps

ISBN PB: 978-1-913043-12-4 • £11.99

ISBN HB: 978-1-913043-21-6 • £22

eISBN: 978-1-913043-13-1 • £6.99

Territories: World

Ghalya F T Al Said is a novelist who studied in Oman and the UK, and has a PhD in International Relations from the University of Warwick. She has published poems, short stories and six novels. Her novels focus on immigrants in foreign, usually Western, settings and their attempts to cope and adapt to conflicting concepts of belief and culture. *The Madness of Despair* is her first novel in English translation and one of four set in the UK.

"A unique work in modern Arab literature"
Rose of Youssef magazine

Fadhil Al-Azzawi's Beautiful Creatures

Fadhil al-Azzawi

Banipal  Books



Open work • 152 pages
September 2021
B-format

ISBN HB: 978-1-913043-22-3 • £20

ISBN PB: 978-1-913043-10-0 • £9.99

eISBN: 978-1-913043-11-7 • £6.99

Territories: World

Fadhil al-Azzawi was born in Kirkuk, Iraq, in 1940. His innovative works blend Arabic literary tradition with western modernism and postmodernism. His published works number more than thirty, including novels, poetry, essays and many literary translations into Arabic. He was arrested many times by the country's military regimes for his political and cultural activities and spent three years in jail. He left Iraq in 1977, and lives in Berlin.

Fadhil Al-Azzawi's Beautiful Creatures by Fadhil Al-Azzawi

Translated from the Arabic
by the author and edited
by Hannah Somerville

This open work was written in defiance of the "sanctity of genre" and to raise the question of freedom of expression in writing. First published in Arabic in 1969 to great acclaim, it has been variously called a novel or a prose poem, while the author calls it an epic in prose, divided as it is into cantos.

In mid-1960s Iraq such an open-ended form, in which different genres could come together and blend into each other, was difficult to even imagine. For Fadhil al-Azzawi it was the core of a new vision of life after the country's tough political experiences, especially the bloody coup of February 1963, and then abysmal defeat in the June 1967 Six-Day War.

The preface to the original Arabic edition noted: "Everything in this open novel returns to itself and acquires its own particular innocence, even in language, so that the novel becomes a poem, a play, a film, a painting and a piece of music all at once without ever meaning to [. . .] It talks about itself in its own very particular way, where it says nothing specific so that it can say everything."

Poems of Alexandria and New York by Ahmed Morsi

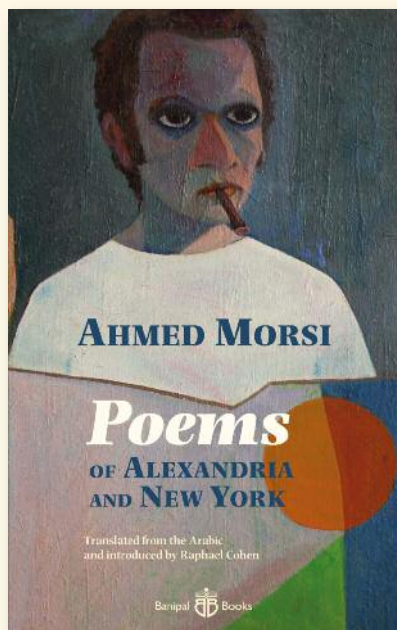
Introduced and translated from the Arabic by Raphael Cohen

Ahmed Morsi is a renowned painter as well as a prolific art critic, journalist, translator, and, as this book reveals to a new audience, a consummate poet, with his debut collection published at the age of 19.

Poems of Alexandria and New York, Ahmed Morsi's first volume in English translation, captures the modernity and empathy at the heart of all his works, his surrealistic humour, and his visions of the dramas of ordinary life. It comprises two of his best known collections, *Pictures from the New York Album* and *Elegies to the Mediterranean*, both written when he resumed writing poetry following a break of nearly 30 years after the calamitous Arab defeat in the 1967 Six-Day War.

The former opens up the city of New York, his home since the mid-1970s and where he still lives and works, while the latter takes readers deep into abiding memories of the Mediterranean city of his birth, Alexandria, Egypt.

Raphael Cohen is a professional translator and lexicographer who studied Arabic and Hebrew at the Universities of Oxford and Chicago. He has translated a number of works by contemporary Arab poets



Poetry • 126 pages

September 2021

B-format paperback

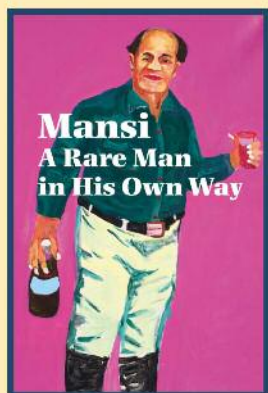
PB ISBN: 978-1-913043-15-5 • £10.99

eISBN: 978-1-913043-16-2 • £6.99

Territories: World

Ahmed Morsi is a poet and artist, born in Alexandria, Egypt in 1930. He studied there in the studio of Silvio Becchi, becoming a part of Alexandria's literary and artistic society. In Cairo, he co-founded and was editor-in-chief of the famous avant-garde literary magazine *Galerie '68* and designed stage sets for the Cairo Opera House. In 1974, he moved to New York City, painting, printmaking, and later returning also to poetry.

Tayeb Salih



Translated from the Arabic by Adil Babikir

Banipal  Books



Memoir • 184 pages
April 2020
B-format PB with flaps
ISBN: 978-0-9956369-8-9 • £9.99
eISBN: 978-0-9956369-9-6 • £6.99
Territories: World

Adil Babikir is a Sudanese translator and writer, based in the UAE. His translations include *Modern Sudanese Poetry* (2019); *The Jungo: Stakes of the Earth* by Abdelaziz Baraka Sakin (2015); *Literary Sudans: an Anthology of Literature from Sudan and South Sudan* (2016).

Mansi: A Rare Man in His Own Way by Tayeb Salih

Introduced and translated from
the Arabic by Adil Babikir

With humour, wit and erudite poetic insights, Tayeb Salih shows another side to his writing in this affectionate memoir of his exuberant and irrepressible friend Mansi Yousif Bastawrous, sometimes known as Michael Joseph and sometimes as Ahmed Mansi Yousif.

Playing Hardy to Salih's Laurel, Mansi takes centre stage among memorable 20th-century arts and political figures, including Samuel Beckett, Margot Fonteyn, Omar Sharif, Arnold Toynbee, Richard Crossman and even the Queen, but always with Salih's poet "Master" al-Mutanabbi ready with an adroit comment.

"This is a flavourful and entertaining memoir of Salih's friendship with a shape-shifting, rule-breaking character who treated life as an "endless laugh". His picaresque portrait of the Egyptian-born writer, actor, teacher and adventurer known as "Mansi" abounds in high spirits, tall stories, character sketches and outlandish plot-twists." Boyd Tonkin

Tayeb Salih (1929–2009) is internationally renowned for his *Season of Migration to the North* (tr. Denys Johnson-Davies), which was declared 'the most important Arabic novel of the 20th century' by the Arab Literary Academy in 2001.

Goat Mountain

by Habib Selmi

Translated from the Arabic
by Charis Olszok

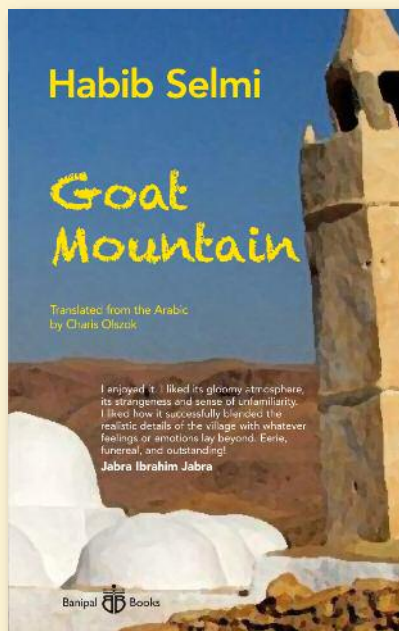
In *Goat Mountain*, Habib Selmi's first novel, published in Arabic in 1988, a young man's journey begins in a dilapidated old bus that takes four hours to reach Al-'Ala, from where he takes a long ride on mule back, accompanied by a mysterious older man who is to play an important part in the young man's new life as a teacher.

They finally arrive at Goat Mountain, a forlorn and dusty Tunisian desert village. The school is a single room. The youth passes the first night in the house of his uncommunicative guide, whose name is Ismail . . .

He grows more uneasy and depressed as Ismail becomes ever more powerful until, with a new truck and his own private army, Ismail dominates village life and casts a menacing shadow over the young man.

"I enjoyed this book. I liked its gloomy atmosphere, its strangeness and sense of unfamiliarity. Eerie, funereal, and outstanding!" – Jabra Ibrahim Jabra

Charis Olszok is a Lecturer in Modern Arabic Literature and Culture at the University of Cambridge and a translator of modern Arabic fiction.



Fiction • 92 pages

April 2020

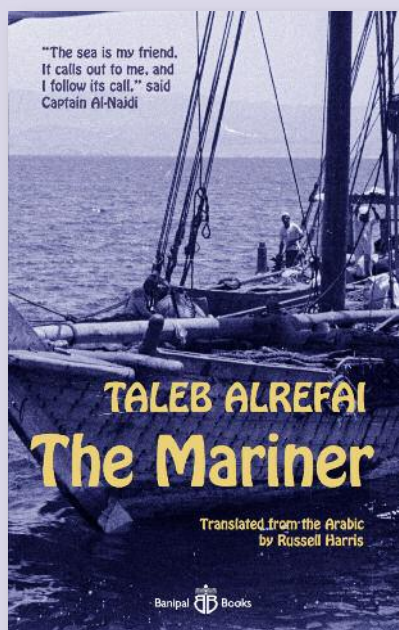
B-format paperback

ISBN: 978-1-913043-04-9 • £10.99

eISBN: 978-1-913043-05-6 • £6.99

Territories: World

Habib Selmi was born in 1951 in Al-'Ala, near the city of Kairouan in Tunisia, and since 1981 has lived in Paris, France. His writing career started with short stories, before starting a new experience – writing *Goat Mountain*, published in Beirut in 1988. Selmi is now an acclaimed author of a dozen novels, with translations into English, French, German, Italian and Malayalam.



Fiction • 160 pages

April 2020

B-format paperback

ISBN: 978-1-913043-08-7 • £9.99

eISBN: 978-1-913043-09-4 • £6.99

Territories: World

Russell Harris is a translator of literary works from French and Arabic. His translations include works by Naguib Mahfouz, Alaa al-Aswany and Tawfiq al-Hakim.

The Mariner by Taleb Alrefai

Translated from the Arabic
by Russell Harris

Taleb Alrefai turns a spotlight on Kuwait's pearl-fishing history in this enthralling fictional re-telling of that fateful day, 19 February 1979, when the country's famous dhow shipmaster Captain Al-Najdi is lost at sea in a treacherous storm.

In between fishing for seabream with two friends, the retired mariner looks back on how the sea has been calling him since childhood, on the punishing work of pearl-divers, and how he became a captain at 14.

As he recalls his voyages around the Arabian Peninsula, some with renowned Australian sailor Alan Villiers, he meditates on how the sea was abandoned when pearl-fishing ended with the discovery of synthetic pearls and oil. Meanwhile, howling winds and enormous black waves suddenly erupt and quickly engulf the small fishing boat.

Taleb Alrefai is a Kuwaiti novelist and short story writer, born in 1958. His novels include *The Shade of the Sun* (1998), *Petty Thefts* (2011), *The Dress* (2009) and *Here* (2015) and *Scent of the Sea* (2001). He is founder of the Al Multaqa Prize for the Arabic short story, run in partnership with the American University in Kuwait, where he teaches creative writing.

A Boat to Lesbos by Nouri al-Jarrah

Translated from the Arabic
by Camilo Gómez-Rivas
and Allison Blecker

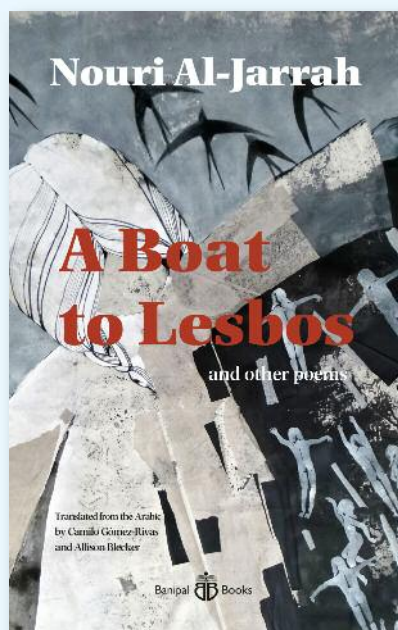
A Boat to Lesbos is a powerful epic poem, written while thousands of Syrian refugees were enduring frightening journeys across the Mediterranean before arriving on the small island.

Set out like a Greek tragedy, it is passionate and dramatic witness to the horrors and ravages suffered by Syrian families forced to flee their destroyed country, seen through the eye of history, the poetry of Sappho and the travels of Odysseus.

It also includes poems written while the poet visited Lesbos during the refugee crisis. In addition to the original Arabic edition and this English one of *A Boat to Lesbos* there are translations into French, Spanish, Italian, Greek, and Turkish. This is Nouri al-Jarrah's first collection in English translation.

"The delicate, heart-breaking poems in A Boat to Lesbos find in Sappho's exile a common bond between the island's most famous poet and Syrians escaping civil war" – Ruth Padel

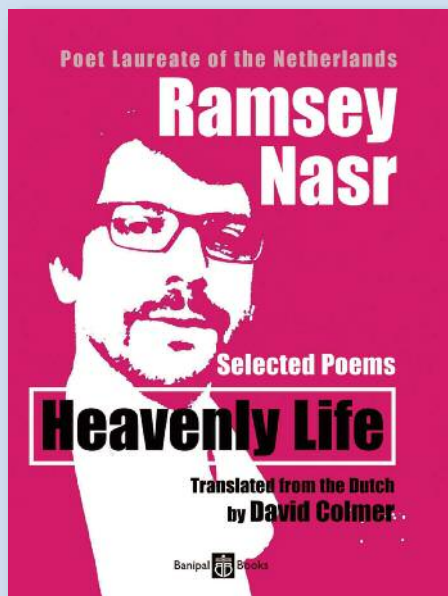
- The cover painting and twenty black and white works inside are by Syrian artist Reem Yassouf



Poetry • 120 pages
April 2018
B-format paperback
ISBN: 978-0-9956369-4-1 • £9.99
Territories: World

Nouri al-Jarrah was born in Damascus in 1956. His poetry draws on diverse cultural sources, and is marked by a focus on mythology, folk tales and legends. He attracted attention with his debut collection of poems, *The Boy* (1982) and has become an influential poetic voice on the Arab literary scene.

Camilo Gómez-Rivas is Associate Professor of Mediterranean Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz.
Allison Blecker is a research associate at Swarthmore College, USA.



Poetry • 180 pages
November 2010
Paperback 198 x 148mm
ISBN: 978-0-9549666-9-0 • £7.99
Territories: World

David Colmer is an award-winning translator of Dutch literature into English from a wide range of genres. He has dynamically recreated in English the patterns and sounds of Ramsey Nasr's inventive, bold and thoughtful poems. He was joint-winner of the 2010 IMPAC prize for his translation of *The Twin* by Gerbrand Bakker.

Heavenly Life: Selected Poems by Ramsey Nasr

Translated from the Dutch
by David Colmer

Foreword by Ruth Padel and
Introduced by Victor Schiferli

The poems in *Heavenly Life* were selected by the poet from his collections and from works written as poet laureate. They include the poem which voted Nasr into his Poet Laureate post in the Netherlands in 2009. Another is a three-part poem inspired by the life of Dmitri Shostakovich and based on his "Sonata for Viola and Piano".

The title poem "Heavenly Life", meanwhile, was written to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Gustav Mahler's birth and is based on his Fourth Symphony, the four sections of the poem echoing the structure, tone and length of its movements. It is named after *Das Himmlische Leben*, the song that forms the symphony's finale.

Ramsey Nasr is an award-winning poet, essayist, dramatist and actor, born 1974 in Rotterdam into a Palestinian-Dutch family. As city poet of Antwerp in 2005 his appearances were attended like pop concerts. In 2009 he was voted Poet Laureate of the Netherlands.

An Iraqi in Paris by Samuel Shimon

Translated from the Arabic by
Christina Phillips and Piers
Amodia with the author

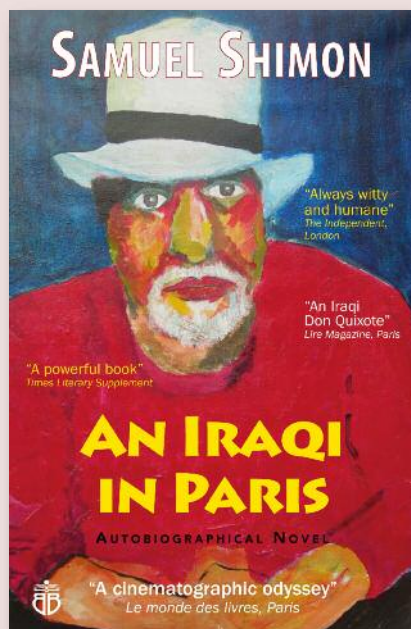
A fully revised third edition in translation of this best-selling 'gem of autobiographical writing' in the Arab world, by an author who has been called 'a relentless raconteur', 'a modern Odysseus', 'the Iraqi Don Quixote'.

Providentially leaving Iraq just before Saddam Hussein installs himself as President, the Assyrian boy dreams of becoming a Hollywood film-maker after his hero John Ford.

But after arrest and torture in Syria – accused of being a Jewish spy on account of his name, similar treatment in Jordan, and escaping execution in Lebanon by armed militia, he eventually lands up on the streets of Paris.

There he meets up with Jean Valjean and tries to escape his fate as a homeless refugee with wit, humour and amorous adventures, all the while writing the story of his childhood, his deaf-mute father Kika, and film buff Kiryakos.

"It is a manifesto of tolerance. It is a text more like the taste of wine: sweet and sour, biting, exhilarating, strong and flowing. Such a novel gives the saga of Iraqi (and Arab) exile a literary value we have been waiting for for such a long time" – **Yussef Bazzi, Al-Mustaqbal newspaper**



Fiction • 282 pages

November 2016

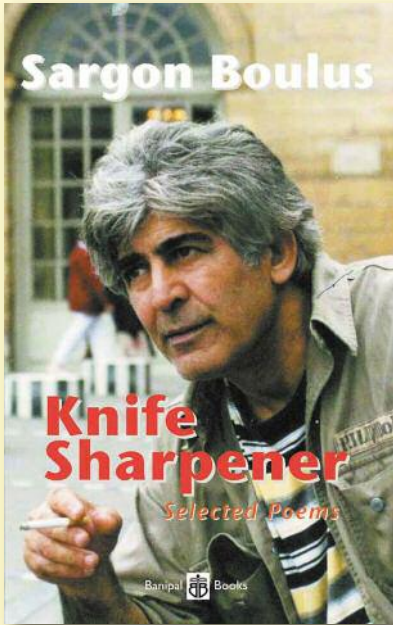
B-format paperback

ISBN: 978-0-9574424-8-1 • £9.99

Territories: World

Samuel Shimon was born into an Assyrian family in 1956 in Al-Habbaniyah, Iraq. He left Iraq in 1979 to go to Hollywood and become a film-maker, and got as far as Damascus, Amman, Beirut, Nicosia, Cairo, Tunis and Paris, before settling in London, where he lives and works, co-founding Banipal magazine of modern Arab literature in 1997.

Christina Phillips is an Associate Professor in Arabic and Comparative Literature; **Piers Amodia** is a translator from Arabic and Italian.



Poetry • 152 pages

July 2009

B-format paperback

ISBN: 978-0-9549666-7-6 • £7.95

Territories: World

"His immense knowledge, especially in world poetry, established both his uniqueness as a poet and his pioneering nature, for he founded a new kind of poem and an atmosphere that did not exist before him" – Abdo Wazen

"Sargon Boulus was a representative of the mythological power of the land of Nmrud, water and Gilgamesh" – Ounsi el-Hage

Knife Sharpener by Sargon Boulus

Selected poems and essay
translated by the poet

Foreword by **Adonis**

Introduction by **Pat Boran**

Afterword by the publisher

Memorial photographs and
tributes by fellow poets

Knife Sharpener is a posthumous commemoration and celebration of Iraqi poet Sargon Boulus, and includes a collection of his poems, written between 1991 and 2007, that he translated himself, together with an essay, "Poetry and Memory", written a few months before he died.

Iraqi poet **Sargon Boulus** (1944-2007) remains one of the Arab world's best-known and influential of contemporary poets. Born into an Iraqi Assyrian family and growing up in Al-Habbaniyah, Kirkuk and Baghdad, he started publishing his own work in 1961, in the groundbreaking *Shi'r* [Poetry] magazine in Beirut.

After settling in San Francisco in the late 1960s, he started translating most major English-language modern poets into Arabic, and dedicated his life to reading, writing and translating poetry, sometimes making forays to Europe to meet up with fellow exiles and perform at festivals. He died in Berlin, October 2007.

Shepherd of Solitude by Amjad Nasser

Introduced and translated from
the Arabic by Khaled Mattawa

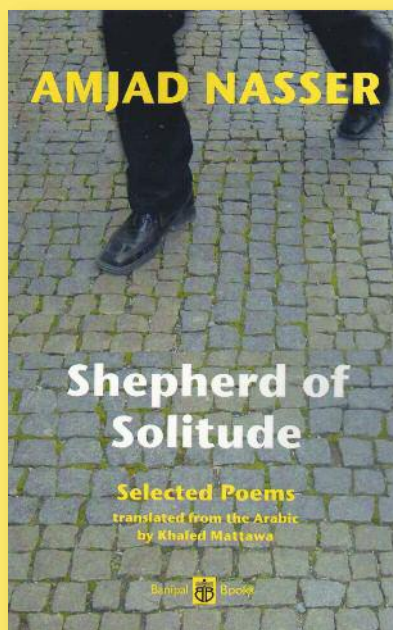
This is the first English-language collection for this major modern Arab poet, who lived most of his life outside his home country of Jordan. The poems were selected by the poet and translator from his works over the years 1979 to 2004.

At times a powerfully existential chronicle of exile, *Shepherd of Solitude* conjures a new understanding of Arab life, from war-torn Beirut, to castles in Andalusia, to Bedouin Jordan, to a London suburb.

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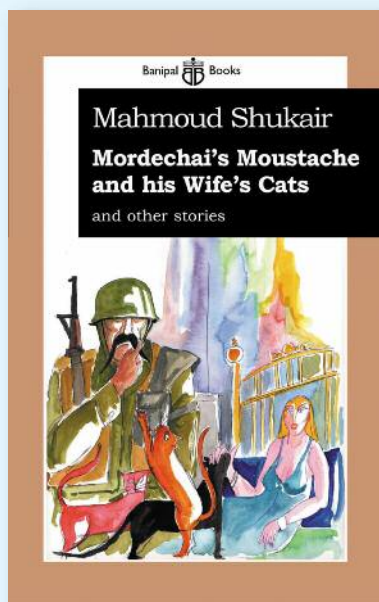
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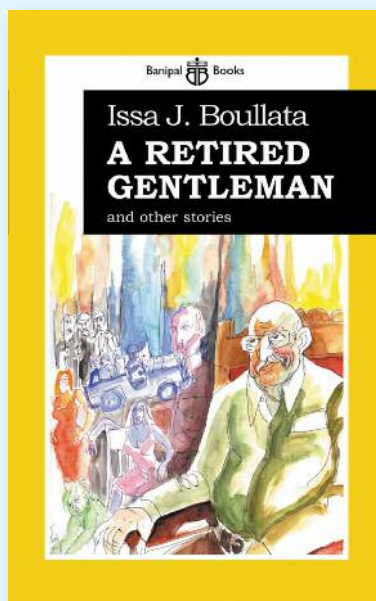
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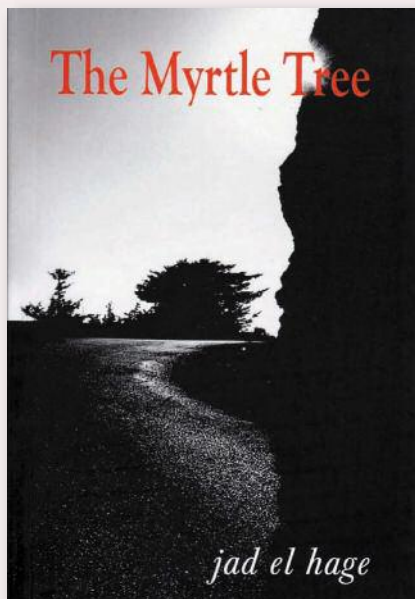
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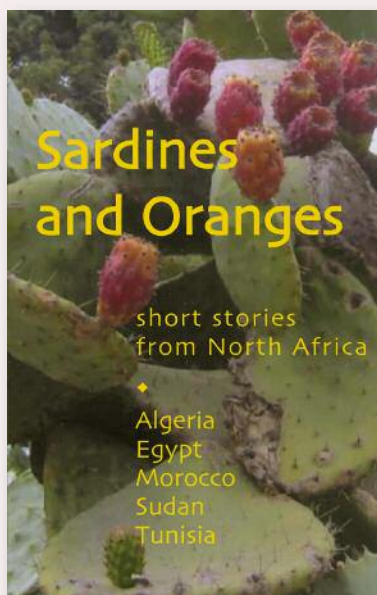


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